

**POET LAUREATE OF  
BROOKLINE**

**Program Description and Guidelines**

Amended by Brookline Select Board  
Jan 26, 2021

# **POET LAUREATE OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES**

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND MISSION**

The Town of Brookline, Massachusetts (the Town), is home to a number of highly accomplished literary artists. While the Town, through organizations such as the Brookline Commission for the Arts (BCA), actively supports artists working in several media, there is a need to increase appreciation for the literary arts. A Poet Laureate appointed by the Brookline Select Board would help to promote their particular craft and literary arts in general in the community.

### **Mission of the Poet Laureate Program**

- ◆ To enhance cultural life in Brookline
- ◆ To promote awareness and appreciation of the literary arts to a wide range of audiences
- ◆ To utilize the literary arts to celebrate community events
- ◆ To connect members of the Brookline community through literary arts

The BCA, for its part, will support the Poet Laureate and the Program through advertising, communication, and facilitation of required and ad hoc events.

## **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **Administration**

The Poet Laureate of Brookline Program (the Program) was established by authority of the Select Board of the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts on January 17, 2012. The official name of the Program is “The Poet Laureate of Brookline Program.” The Select Board has adopted and may amend these guidelines at any time. The Select Board shall also have the right to terminate the Program.

In an effort to broaden the search for exceptional talent in the Town, and to increase the demographic, disciplinary, and experiential diversity of laureates, the BCA will, from 2021 onward, consider not only poets but also those accomplished in other literary forms, including, but not limited to, fiction, non-fiction, spoken word poetry, songwriting, and playwriting.

The Program shall be administered by the BCA on behalf of the Town of Brookline. Among its responsibilities the BCA shall:

- ◆ Assign a BCA member as a liaison to the Poet Laureate
- ◆ Publicize events that feature the Poet Laureate in various media, including the BCA’s web site
- ◆ Maintain an archive of the Poet Laureate’s activities through meeting minutes with information provided by the BCA liaison and the Poet Laureate, who shall attend commission meetings three times a year seasonally (fall, winter, spring)
- ◆ Facilitate the activities of the Poet Laureate by helping to make initial contacts with appropriate community members

- ◆ Assist the Poet Laureate with questions/concerns that may arise in conjunction with the position

The BCA shall provide the Select Board with a report on the Program as part of the BCA's Annual Report to the Town.

### **Eligibility**

The Poet Laureate must:

- ◆ Be a resident of Brookline
- ◆ Have a demonstrated commitment to the community
- ◆ Have a substantial body of work in one or more forms of literary arts, including published work and/or a history of public appearances
- ◆ Have the ability and enthusiasm to fulfill the duties of the Poet Laureate

All candidates are eligible regardless of age, race, gender, belief, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

### **Submission Requirements**

- ◆ Letter of interest outlining the applicant's reasons for applying and vision for the position
- ◆ Curriculum vitae
- ◆ A selection of representative work

### **Term**

Each Poet Laureate shall serve for a term of three years. A laureate's term may be renewed, without going through the full application process, after mutual consideration by the laureate, BCA, and Select Board.

If a laureate is not meeting the BCA's requirements or community expectations, the BCA reserves the right to terminate the laureate's term by a two-thirds vote of commissioners, subject to approval by the Select Board.

### **Duties/Requirements**

- ◆ Give appropriate readings or performances at two Town events in each year of a laureate's term: (1) the Town's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event and (2) the BCA's Arts Grantee Reception
- ◆ Give appropriate readings or performances at a minimum of three public events in each year of a laureate's term, which must include the following: (1) a workshop in conjunction with Brookline Public Schools, (2) an event coordinated with the Brookline Booksmith, and (3) an event of the laureate's own creation
- ◆ Undertakings of the laureate's own initiative using creative and innovative ways to expose the residents of Brookline to the literary arts
- ◆ Outreach to Town sites such as schools, libraries, senior center and housing, and teen center

- ◆ Present poetry or other literary works in public venues and publications in Town, and representation of the Town at events and in publications in other municipalities where appropriate
- ◆ If a poet, participate in public commemoration of National Poetry Month in April
- ◆ Attend BCA meetings three times each year seasonally (fall, winter, spring) of the term to report on activities

### **Selection Committee**

The selection committee will be formed by the BCA's Poet Laureate sub-committee and will include:

- ◆ At least one member of the BCA who shall serve as chair
- ◆ A writer or recognized authority on poetry and other literary genres
- ◆ An individual affiliated with the Brookline Public Schools (e.g., teacher, parent, school committee member, school librarian) appointed by the School Committee
- ◆ An individual affiliated with the Brookline Public Library to be appointed by the Board of Library Trustees
- ◆ An individual affiliated with a local institution of higher learning
- ◆ An at-large member of the community

All members of the selection committee shall be residents of the Town of Brookline. The selection committee shall meet in such manner of time as to be able to select a laureate prior to May 1st of a given search year.

### **Schedule**

Upon selection by the BCA Poet Laureate sub-committee, the Poet Laureate will begin his or her term on May 1st following the meeting of the sub-committee.

### **Publicity for Selection and Announcement Process**

The BCA shall manage, and the Select Board shall facilitate, the publicity for the Program's selection process and the announcement of each Poet Laureate.

### **Stipend and Budget**

The stipend will be \$4,500 total for the term, payable via the Select Board at \$1,500 each year of the term. The BCA also extends to the laureate reimbursement of reasonable expenses, upon approval by commissioners, related to events given in their official capacity.

If a laureate should be terminated by the BCA and Select Board, the stipend amount for the year in which termination occurs will be pro-rated up to the month of termination.

### **Agreement**

It will be a condition of the appointment that the Poet Laureate, the Town, and the BCA enter into a mutual written contract.

**Vacancy**

In the event of a vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.